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Senate passes \$40 billion emergency spending bill

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WASHINGTON (CNN) — The Senate unanimously approved a \$40 billion emergency spending bill on Friday morning, freeing up funds for rescue and cleanup efforts underway in New York and Virginia and to bolster the nation's counter-terrorism efforts. The House is set to do the same.

Legislators worked at a fast pace over the past two days, Democrats and Republicans alike, to get the measures approved and delivered to President George W. Bush quickly, in order to assist federal, state and local authorities with the massive, ongoing response to Tuesday's unprecedented attacks.

"These are different times, and we have to act decisively. The American people expect it, and they will accept nothing less," said Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Mississippi, before the roll was called on the spending bill. "The world has changed and we are acting appropriately."

The Senate vote, 96 to 0, began as members of the House of Representatives were wrapping up their debate on the legislation, in tones that evoked the same sense of urgency and purpose.

After the vote, many members of Congress were planning to attend services in remembrance of the victims at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and passengers and crews aboard the four hijacked airliners that crashed on Tuesday.

"Let there be no doubt, our choice -- the choice of President Bush, the choice of the United States Congress, and the choice of the great people of a great nation -- is to fight back," said Rep. Bill Young, R-Florida, the chairman of the House appropriations committee. "The world will be impressed by our response and we mobilize for this fight."

Moments after its vote on the spending bill, the Senate took up another measure authorizing the use of force against those responsible for the attacks, which also was expected to receive an overwhelming approval.

A deal to approve the spending measure was struck between White House negotiators and senior leaders from the House and Senate early Friday morning.

According to a senior administration official, the aid package will be distributed on the following time schedule and with these congressional requirements:

-- \$10 billion released immediately to aid recovery and cleanup efforts in New York and Virginia. -- \$10 billion to be released after a 15-day waiting period where Congress requires written certification from President Bush. -- \$20 billion that can be obligated only after the president makes a specific request of Congress.

"We have a deal," the senior administration official said. "It took a while and it seemed we went around the tracks three or more times, but we got it done."

Senior members of Congress from both parties wanted to make sure Congress' constitutional control of federal monies was protected and that the Bush White House would not have unlimited power to spend the full \$40 billion.

"The White House is happy, the Democrats are happy, the speaker is happy, and the American people should be happy," said John Feehery, spokesman for House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Illinois.

The amount of the recovery package is twice the amount originally requested by the White House.

There were some snags as the House considered the measure late Thursday night, over who controls how the funds would be spent -- the White House or Congress.

Republican congressional aides said the White House wanted "unfettered" authority over the money, but lawmakers said that would violate their constitutional power of the purse.

According to appropriations committee aides on both sides of the aisle, there had been an agreement for \$20 billion of the funds to go toward domestic humanitarian assistance and recovery efforts -- primarily for, but not specified for, New York.

The rest of the money will go toward intelligence, law enforcement agencies, improved security for transportation systems and other expenses.

The White House requested \$20 billion originally, but Hastert said lawmakers agreed, in a rare bipartisan meeting, to double the amount to \$40 billion.

Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, D-South Dakota, told CNN the extra \$20 billion came after New York Gov. George Pataki, New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani and the New York congressional delegation appealed to Bush for the funds.

Lawmakers have taken pains to work in a bipartisan way and show that Congress is unified and willing to act swiftly. "We are working together here in the Congress in a completely nonpartisan way," said House Minority

Leader Richard Gephardt, D-Missouri.

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